



# SIERRA CLUB

**Connecticut Chapter**  
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February 24, 2022

Dear Senator Needleman, Representative Arconti, Senator Winfield, Representative Allie-Brennan, Senator Formica, Representative Ferraro and members of the Energy and Technology Committee,

On behalf of the Sierra Club and our more than 40,000 members and supporters in Connecticut, thank you for the opportunity to testify on several issues before you today.

The Sierra Club is committed to defending everyone's right to a healthy world by tackling the serious challenges of a warming climate and unprecedented levels of pollution. Fossil fuels are the main driver of climate change as well as unhealthy air, and therefore our most powerful tool to address both is to create a rapid and equitable transition away from fossil fuels to clean and renewable energy across all sectors of our economy. Increasingly, storms that cripple our electric grid with greater frequency and duration, and events in the world that spike the price of fossil fuels also painfully highlight the need to move away from our dependence on fossil fuels and toward a more renewable, resilient and distributed electric grid as quickly as possible.

Though Connecticut's Global Warming Solutions Act requires a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions below 2001 levels by 45% by 2030 and 80% by 2050 in alignment with climate science, DEEP's latest greenhouse gas inventory shows that we are not on track to meet these goals.

That's why Connecticut must now focus on critically needed strategies to cut greenhouse gas emissions from the most polluting sources - buildings, transportation and electricity generation. This means passing laws that require Connecticut to achieve clear and measurable steps towards a 100% renewable electricity sector, efficient and fossil free buildings, and zero-emission transportation. We must do much, much more than has been done to date, or that is proposed thus far this session.

#### SB 10 - An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation

Sierra Club fully supports SB 10 An Act Concerning Climate Change Mitigation. SB 10 will establish a mandated target of zero-carbon electricity supplied to the state by 2040. This target is an important step towards establishing a clean electricity grid in Connecticut.

Additional steps that Sierra Club believes will be needed for a clean electricity grid within the next few years include a moratorium on new fossil fuel-based electricity generation, a plan to retire dirty power plants, and a corresponding plan for the acceleration of zero-emission renewable energy (solar, wind and battery storage) to replace them.

SB 10 is a step on this pathway, and we urge its passage.

#### HB 5118 - An Act Concerning Waste Management and Anaerobic Digestion

The Sierra Club opposes the adoption of any law that would permit the injection of biogas, "renewable" gas or hydrogen into the gas distribution system in the state. As demonstrated by

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Sierra Club investigations into gas line leaks in Connecticut in 2019<sup>1</sup> and 2016<sup>2</sup>, leaks in Connecticut's gas distribution system are pervasive and persistent. Gas leaking from the pipeline system is primarily composed of methane, a short-lived but powerful greenhouse gas that has 87 times the global warming impact as CO<sub>2</sub> over 20 years. Recent research from Robert Howarth<sup>3</sup> shows that methane leaks have been identified as an accelerant of climate change. Injecting additional methane into this leaky distribution system should not be permitted.

Transitioning off fossil gas is necessary to meet the requirements of the GWSA, and at this time, Connecticut must begin to plan how we will reduce our gas pipeline system, not add to it. Use of biogas from anaerobic digesters should be limited to onsite consumption. Additionally, planning should take place to strategically locate all future anaerobic digestion facilities. With such planning, any excess gas can be directed to hard-to-electrify sectors such as industry, long-distance transportation, aviation, and use in electricity generation as longer term energy storage to balance seasonal wind and solar resources. Injecting biogas into pipelines is a recognized effort of the gas industry to keep us tethered to gas pipeline systems as is highlighted in "Rhetoric vs. Reality: The Myth of 'Renewable Natural Gas' for Building Decarbonization,"<sup>4</sup> a report by EarthJustice and Sierra Club.

Sierra Club also opposes changes to the RPS that will reduce Class I renewable energy, and increase Class II trash incineration energy. If anything, Connecticut needs to ramp up the requirement for Class I renewable sources and remove gas-powered fuel cells, biogas, and biomass from the Class I definition.

It is also important to note that biogas is not necessarily environmentally suitable. Before considering capturing and using waste methane as a fossil gas alternative, Connecticut should examine whether the methane emissions could be prevented in the first place through better resource or waste management practices.

Sierra Club Connecticut urges you to reject this bill and instead require biogas generated by anaerobic digesters to be used onsite or to locate digesters near hard to electrify applications.

#### SB 92 - An Act Permitting Ten-Year Contractual Periods for the Transportation of School Children in Zero-Emission School Buses

Sierra Club supports SB 92 to allow ten-year contracts for zero-emission school buses. For climate, clean air, health and operating cost reasons, there is a growing movement nationwide towards the adoption of zero-emission electric school buses. Across the country, school districts are choosing electric school buses for their fleets. Here in Connecticut, many school districts are expressing an interest in transitioning to electric school buses. A challenge that has been identified to deploying zero-emission school buses is Connecticut's statute limiting school bus contracts to a maximum of five years. This bill will address that challenge and help make zero-emission school buses a reality throughout Connecticut.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://66f28e57-02e8-44f5-8613-feb302092242.usrfiles.com/ugd/66f28e\\_ebfb4cee05294559a95da105a88583fb.pdf](https://66f28e57-02e8-44f5-8613-feb302092242.usrfiles.com/ugd/66f28e_ebfb4cee05294559a95da105a88583fb.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://ctsierraclub.wixsite.com/sierraclub-ct/hartford-mobile-methane-leaks-study>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.eeb.cornell.edu/howarth/publications/f\\_EECT-61539-perspectives-on-air-emissions-of-methane-and-climatic-warmn\\_100815\\_27470.pdf](http://www.eeb.cornell.edu/howarth/publications/f_EECT-61539-perspectives-on-air-emissions-of-methane-and-climatic-warmn_100815_27470.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://earthjustice.org/sites/default/files/feature/2020/report-decarb/Report\\_Building-Decarbonization-2020.pdf](https://earthjustice.org/sites/default/files/feature/2020/report-decarb/Report_Building-Decarbonization-2020.pdf)

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HB 5117 - An Act Concerning Electric Vehicle Charging Stations

Sierra Club Connecticut supports HB 5117 to remove barriers to the installation of electric vehicle charging stations for tenants.

Thank you for consideration of our testimony.

Sincerely,

Samantha Dynowski, State Director  
Sierra Club Connecticut